

References

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Scopus 29: 18-19, December 2009

Received: 20 August 2009

Notes on nesting herons and other birds of interest at Lake Kalemawe in northern Tanzania

Lake Kalemawe (northwest end: 38°5'S, 04°23'E) lies in the valley east of the South Pare Mountains and west of Mkomazi Game Reserve. It was created during colonial times by damming the southern end of the Kadando Swamp that drains the eastern slopes of the South Pare Mountains principally through the Yongoma and Higililu rivers. These rivers flow south into the Pangani River through the Mkomazi River between the South Pare and West Usambara Mountains. The swamp to the north of the lake is currently a large rice scheme. At high water the lake covers some 800 ha along the 520 m elevation contour.

Lake Kalemawe is not included in the gazetteer in Britton (1980) and no mention can be traced of it in the bird literature of the 1980s and 1990s although it has been counted by the Tanzania Bird Atlas Project (TBAP) team in the recent past, and was included in the 1995 waterbird count when only 2377 birds were counted (Baker 1997).

On 21 May 2004 the water level was still high after heavy rains. We took a canoe trip across the lake to visit a heronry just off the north-eastern shore. Among the extensive stands of water grass were some thousands of Lesser Moorhen *Gallinula angulata* and hundreds of Allen's Gallinules *Porphyrio alleni*; no attempt was made to look for nests of these species. However, some 30 active nests of Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybridus* were opportunistically seen, with clutches of between 2 and 3 eggs.

We found the heronry in a ring of *Acacia* trees, which was at the time isolated from the shore by the higher than usual water levels. The majority of nests were within the ring of trees; it was possible to push the canoe through

the *Acacia* branches to actually reach the core of the heronry. The following nine species were represented at the heronry (including some adjacent colonies): Pink-backed Pelican *Pelecanus rufescens* (15 individuals, no nests found); Greater Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* (a few pairs in adjacent smaller colony); Long-tailed Cormorant *P. africanus* (>50 active nests, many with large chicks, often five per nest, plus approximately 20 nests in an adjacent colony); Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopica* (<50 pairs towards the higher branches so nest content was hidden from our view); Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* (>active 200 nests, many with small young); Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides* (<50 nests, many sitting tight on eggs); Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* (a few birds, no nests seen); Yellow-billed Egret *Egretta intermedia* (a few active nests, the lime green lores of adult birds being most distinctive); and African Darter *Anhinga rufa* (a few active nests in adjacent colony).

In light of many wetlands being under threat from development and agricultural expansion in eastern Africa, reports of nesting colonies of waterbirds are important baseline information to collect. This is especially true if observers can estimate the number of nests, which will enable an assessment of the breeding populations of waterbirds in this region. We therefore hope this note will encourage others to document records of waterbird breeding colonies, especially in poorly studied wetlands of eastern Africa.

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Scopus 29: 19–20, December 2009

Received: 17 August 2009